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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

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SECRET (When Filled In) CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD BACKGROUND USE ONLY

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

REPORT NO. TDCS DB-3/656,830

SUBJECT HUYNH VAN LANG COUP MOVE TIMING

DATE DISTR. 24 SEPTEMBER 1963

PRECEDENCE PRIORITY

DATE OF INFO. 24 SEPTEMBER 1963

REFERENCES IN 25834

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (24 SEPTEMBER 1963)

APPRAISAL SEE BELOW

FIELD REPORT NO. FVS-9691

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE A CLOSE ASSOCIATE (C) OF HUYNH VAN LANG, FROM LANG.

APPRAISAL: THERE HAVE BEEN MANY REPORTS INDICATING THAT A COUP IS BEING PLANNED AND SOME OF THE INFORMATION HEREIN AGREES WITH THAT IN OTHER REPORTS. CLAIMS OF SUPPORT INDICATED HEREIN CANNOT BE ACCURATELY APPRAISED AT THIS TIME, NOR CAN THE ACTUAL TIMING OF THE COUP.

1. SUMMARY. HUYNH VAN LANG, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT SAIGON UNIVERSITY, SAID ON 24 AUGUST 1963 THAT HIS COUP GROUP WAS GOING TO LAUNCH A COUP BEFORE 5 OCTOBER AND PROBABLY ON 26 OR 28 SEPTEMBER BECAUSE TROOPS WILL BE IN SAIGON AT THAT TIME. THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE NOW INCLUDES GENERALS TRAN THIEN KHIEM, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF, NGUYEN KHANH, COMMANDING GENERAL OF II CORPS, AND DUONG VAN MINH, MILITARY ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT. EVERY EFFORT IS BEING TAKEN TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF EXTENSIVE BLOODSHED. LANG CLAIMS TO HAVE SIX DIVISIONS

SECRET CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD BACKGROUND USE ONLY CIB

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

STATE/INR	DIA	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NIC	AID	USIA	OCI	ONE	OCR	ORR	[illegible]	EXO
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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

PLUS AIRBORNE, MARINE, AND ARMOR ELEMENTS READY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COUP. BRIGADIER GENERAL DO CAO TRI IS ALSO WORKING WITH THE GROUP.

2. LANG MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE STATUS OF THE COUP:

A. IT IS TO BE INITIATED BEFORE 5 OCTOBER, POSSIBLY ON 26 OR 28 SEPTEMBER. TROOPS WILL BE BROUGHT INTO SAIGON ON 26 SEPTEMBER FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION. MILITARY UNITS WILL REHEARSE ON 28 SEPTEMBER FOR THE 26 OCTOBER NATIONAL DAY PARADE, AND THESE TROOPS WILL REMAIN UNTIL 5 OCTOBER. GENERAL KHIEM WAS TRYING TO ARRANGE THAT HE TROOPS BROUGHT TO SAIGON WOULD BE THOSE WHO WOULD SUPPORT A COUP.

B. NO COUP HAS BEEN INITIATED AS YET BECAUSE EVERY EFFORT IS BEING TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT IT BE RELATIVELY BLOODLESS. LONE ATTEMPT WAS CANCELLED AT THE POINT OF EXECUTION BECAUSE IT WAS THOUGHT THAT FURTHER PREPARATION WOULD PREVENT BLOODSHED.

C. A MAJOR PROBLEM IS THE LACK OF SUITABLE EXPLOSIVES TO BLAST A CONCRETE BUNKER WHERE PRESIDENT DIEM IS EXPECTED TO HIDE. THE ONLY OPENING TO THE BUNKER, OTHER THAN A HEAVY DOOR, IS THE VENTILATION SYSTEM AND THE COUP GROUP HESITATES TO USE FLAME THROWERS OR POISON GAS BECAUSE THEY PREFER TO TAKE DIEM ALIVE.

D. THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE NOW INCLUDES LANG AND GENERALS KHIEM, KHANH, AND DUONG VAN MINH. GENERAL TRI HAS AGREED TO JOIN

THE COUP ATTEMPT. COLONEL BUI DINH DAM, SEVENTH DIVISION COMMANDER, IS BELIEVED READY TO SUPPORT THE COUP BUT HAD NOT BEEN CONTACTED. COLONEL NGUYEN HUU HANH, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE IV CORPS, WHO IS A COUP GROUP MEMBER, BELIEVES THAT BRIGADIER GENERAL HUYNH VAN CAO, IV CORPS COMMANDER, WOULD SUPPORT THE COUP BUT OTHER GROUP MEMBERS ARE NOT CONVINCED.

E. GENERAL KHIEM WILL COMMAND THE COUP FORCES. MAJOR LAM TRANG THO, FORMER SECOND ARMOR SQUADRON COMMANDER AND NOW WITH THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF, WILL COMMAND ARMOR UNITS, INCLUDING SOME ELEMENTS OF HIS OLD SQUADRON PLUS THE FIRST TANK COMPANY AND THE FIFTH MECHANIZED RIFLE COMPANY OF THE FIRST ARMOR SQUADRON.

F. THREE BATTALIONS OF THE AIRBORNE BRIGADE UNDER A MAJOR WILL JOIN ARMOR UNITS IN THE SHOCK FORCE.

G. THE THIRD MARINE BATTALION UNDER CAPTAIN MAHVIET BANG WILL SERVE AS A BLOCKING FORCE TO PREVENT REINFORCEMENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE BY THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD.

H. LIEUTENANT COLONAL PHAM NGOC THAO, STRATEGIC HAMLET INSPECTOR FOR NGO DINH NHU, WILL NOT COMMAND THE SHOCK TROOPS BUT WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT MILITARY FUNCTION DURING THE COUP.

I. LIEUTENANT COLONEL NGUYEN DINH PHAT, KIEN PHONG PROVINCE CHIEF, WILL COME TO SAIGON AND ALSO HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

J. MAJOR NGUYEN VAN TU, COMMANDER OF THE EIGHTH REGIMENT, FIFTH DIVISION, WILL SUPPORT THE COUP WITH HIS FORCES. ALSO INVOLVED IS THE FIFTH RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION.

K. GENERAL KHANH WILL COMMAND SIX DIVISIONS, ASSISTED BY GENERAL TRI. THESE DIVISIONS INCLUDE THE FIRST, SECOND, TWENTY-SECOND, TWENTY-FIFTH, TWENTY-THIRD, AND THE NINTH. ACCORDING TO KHANH, COLONEL BUI DZINH, NINTH DIVISION COMMANBER, IS NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH HIM BUT WILL SUPPORT HIM IN THE COUP.

L. TIMING FOR THE COUP WILL PROBABLY BE 1000 HOURS, 1400 HOURS, OR 0500 HOURS, SO THAT FAVORABLE UNITS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD WILL BE ON DUTY. THESE HOURS ALSO FALL BETWEEN THE NORMAL HOURS FOR CHANGING THE GUARD.

M. ARRIVAL OF HIGH-LEVEL UNITED STATES DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS DISCOURAGED THE COUP GROUP WHICH IS RELUCTANT TO PROCEED WITH THEM PRESENT IN SAIGON. THE GROUP HAS EVEN SPECULATED THE ARRIVAL OF THESE INDIVIDUALS MIGHT SIGNIFY THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS PREPARING A COUP OF ITS OWN; ARTICLES IN THE VIETNAM PRESS WERE CITED AS EVIDENCE OF THIS POSSIBILITY.

3. FIELD DISSEM. STATE (AMBASSADOR LODGE) USMACV (GENERAL HARKINS) CINCPAC PACAF ARPAC PACFLT.

END OF MESSAGE